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THE TRUMAI INDIANS OF CENTRAL BRAZIL

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The situation² was comparable to the previously mentioned communal planting of the garden of the Kamayurá, Uluku.

Canoes

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The standard bark canoe of the upper Xingú was made and used by the Trumai.⁴ Construction was simple and much less time was required to complete it than the typical dugout canoe of the tropical forest. A long, rectangular piece of bark was cut from the *jatobá* tree by men standing on platforms. The bark was then heated over a fire to soften it. The sides were bent up, and the top end of the bark, which narrowed slightly, was made into the bow by bending it upwards. The center of the stern was bent inwards, allowing the whole stern to be well above the water. Leaks were mended with patches of river mud or clay. Propulsion was by paddle, although occasionally poles were used.

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There was also one small dugout in the village which belonged to Aloari, Quain's cook and helper. Aloari had been a Yuruna captive, and it was undoubtedly during this experience that he had learned to make this type craft. He also had a bark canoe and was the only Trumai to own two canoes.

Basketry

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The Trumai men manufactured baskets that were variously shaped and served several purposes. In general, the Trumai were less skilled in this art than their upper Xingú neighbors. Among the baskets described by Quain was a deep, round tray made of *buriti* fiber and another which was used to store manioc flour and, when equipped with shoulder and forehead tumplines, to carry loads. The latter was an openwork container made of bark strips. A smaller basket of this type was made of *buriti* fibers. The manioc sieve, or *tuafi*, was made of stiff *buriti* fronds and was also used to store small articles. It was made by the women.

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The women also made a bark cloth bag known as the *idcenit*, a term that, in addition, designated the female pubic covering.

All of the baskets and similar containers described by Quain were made by other groups of the area, but the art of manufacturing certain varieties was known to only a few Trumai. Some baskets were obtained in trade.

Textiles

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All work in cotton was the exclusive province of the women. Hammocks of both twined and woven types were made. The loom consisted of two upright posts between which a warp of *buriti* fiber was extended.

² Cf. von den Steinen 1897, pp. 223-23.

⁴ [i.e. building Quain's house--Analyst]

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The wool was made of cotton threads. The men's hammocks were usually woven, while those made by the women for themselves were generally an inferior twined product. Other manufactures of cotton were arm and leg bands. [286] [462] [301]

Ceramics

The knowledge of ceramic manufacture cannot be properly considered a part of Trumai culture, despite their daily use of pottery in cooking, manioc processing, eating and storage. All pottery utensils were obtained in trade with the Arawakan Waurá, usually in return for salt. The only clay article of Trumai manufacture was the *ja'meo*, a crude clay griddle on which the *beijú* was baked. The Trumai did not rely completely on pottery for watertight containers, as gourds, grown in their own gardens, were extensively used. [323] [439] [415]

Wood Manufactures

All woodwork was done by the men with, at the time of Quain's visit, steel tools. The most distinctive article was the zoomorphically carved wooden stool, found among all upper Xingú peoples. Quain's notes contain a sketch of one such stool which is very similar to the one depicted by von den Steinen.⁶ Other wood products were canoe paddles, *beijú* paddles, manioc graters, and mortars and pestles, used by the women to pulverize the hard, dry balls of manioc flour. [322] [352] [412] [462]

Weapons

Bows and arrows were used almost to the exclusion of other weapons. The Trumai got their bows in trade from the Kamayurá, but made the bowstrings themselves from the fiber of a tree known to them as the *patacy*. They made their own feathered arrows out of cane, at the end of which was inserted a thin wooden shaft. The points were fixed to the shaft with a tree resin (*awuliteu*) and were wrapped at the juncture with cotton thread. Monkey bone points were used for shooting fish and birds. One man who was making a bamboo point told Quain that it was used for hunting and warfare. Another was seen hammering an arrow point out of a piece of metal. [411] [439] [283] [537]

Spears were not used often, although the Trumai made them. Quain saw a spear point being made of the shin bone of a tapir. The spear-thrower (*zoepé*) was used only in the annual spear-throwing contest. It was made from the wood of a palm. Quain sketched one that had a flat handle with a finger hole and a shaft with a hook on the end, and another that lacked the hook, but had a thong on the end. [237] [526]

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 141.